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ABSTRACT

The findings of a 1986 survey of a stratified random sample of 21,620 employees in the 22 largest agencies of the Federal Government suggest that employees are fairly positive about their work but that they differ in job satisfaction, depending on their age, grade, length of service, and what agency they work for. Sixty-eight percent reported that they are satisfied with their jobs, and 71 percent said they like working where they work. However, employees' responses vary as much as 35 percent in overall satisfaction levels, depending on where the employees work. In general, the older the worker, the higher the grade, or the longer the service, the higher the level of overall satisfaction reported. In addition to overall job satisfaction, the study's 64-item questionnaire addressed the extent to which satisfaction was produced or hindered by specific policies and practices. It was recommended that, because not all employees are affected in the same way by federal personnel policies and practices, efforts to enhance the Federal Government as an employer should be focused according to these differences. (Twelve references are included.) (CML)

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ED308338

A Special Study

WORKING FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Job Satisfaction And Federal Employees

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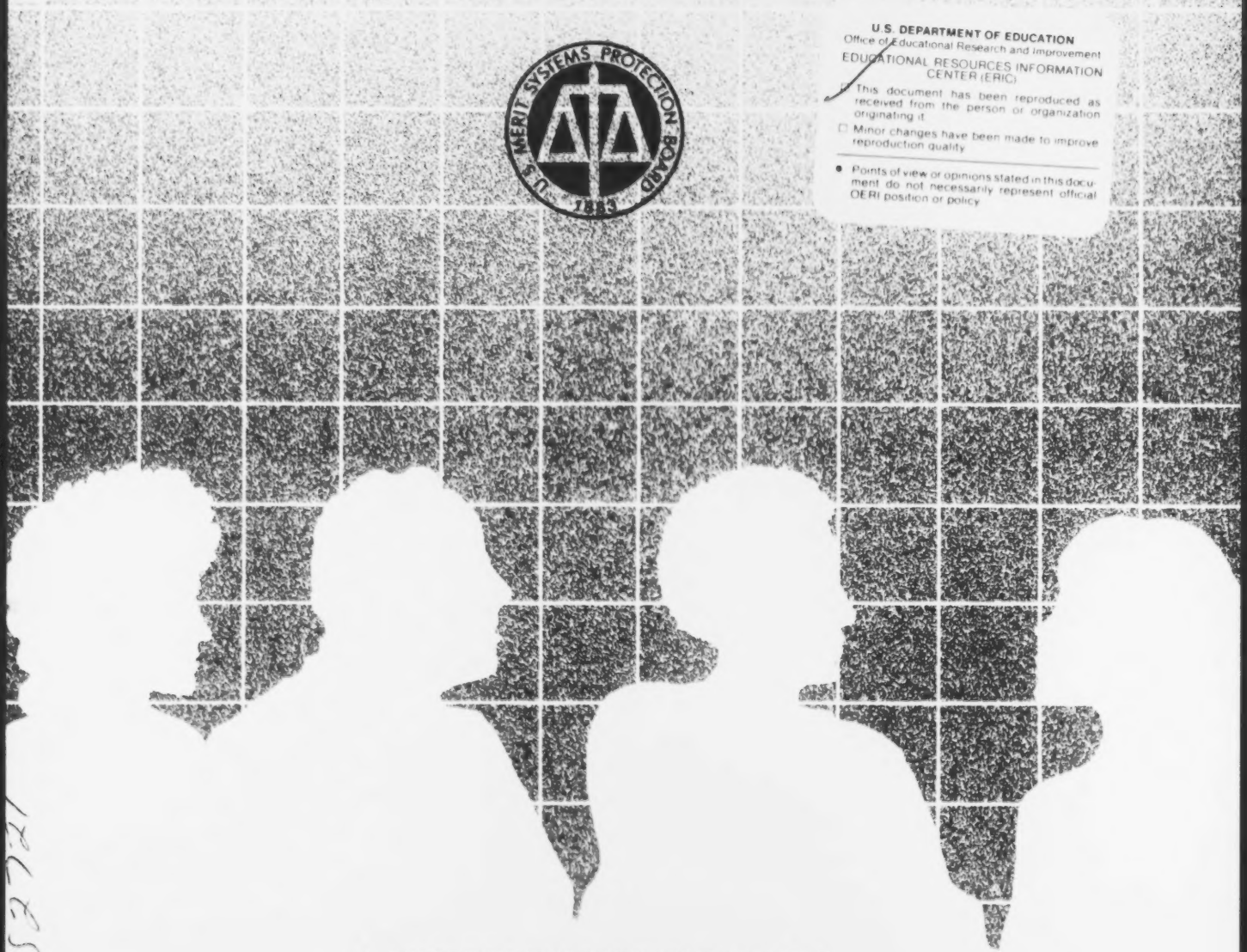

A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES BY
THE U. S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

OCTOBER 1987

CE 052 721

THE CHAIRMAN

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1120 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20419

October 21, 1987

Sirs:

In accordance with section 202(a) of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. §1205(a)(3)), it is my honor to submit this Merit Systems Protection Board report titled "Working For the Government: Job Satisfaction and Federal Employees."

This report covers a number of areas of particular interest to Federal Personnel Management, including:

1. Differences in levels of overall job satisfaction among groups of Federal employees (e.g., employees categorized by sex, agency, pay plan, and grade); and

2. Employees' attitudes toward various facets of worklife, (e.g., the work itself, pay, health insurance, and retirement).

I believe you will find this report useful as you consider issues regarding the management of the Federal civilian work force. The perspectives of this work force are particularly useful in the evaluation of existing personnel programs and policies, and provide valuable information for policy planning purposes.

Respectfully,

Daniel R. Levinson

Daniel R. Levinson

The President of the United States
The President of the Senate
The Speaker of the House of Representatives

Washington, DC

The Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution 1787-1987

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OVERVIEW

The U.S. Government employs roughly 2 million civilians throughout the world. Thus, the personnel management system in the Federal sector has a far-reaching impact on many individuals. Based on merit principles, this system strives to provide a workplace conducive to enhanced productivity and exemplary performance. One way of determining how well the system is meeting this goal is to assess employee perceptions about their worklives. This report discusses a recent study of these perceptions.

What is it like to be a Federal civil servant in today's United States? To explore this issue, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) conducted a survey of 21,620 Federal employees in the 22 largest agencies. Findings from this 1986 survey suggest that employees are fairly positive about their work, with 68 percent of those polled reporting that they are satisfied with their jobs, and 71 percent saying they like working where they work. Does that mean that all Federal employees are happy with all aspects of their worklives?

Not exactly. There are numerous differences in job satisfaction (and components of that job satisfaction) among various sectors of the work force. For example, employees in the 22 agencies included in the survey vary as much as 35 percent in their overall satisfaction levels. Almost three fourths of the respondents in agencies such as National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Air Force, Army, Navy, and the Small Business Administration report they are satisfied with their jobs, while barely half the respondents in some other agencies (e.g., Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and Education) report such satisfaction.

Agency of employment is not the only factor which accounts for differences in how Federal employees feel about their jobs, however. Generally speaking, the older the worker, the higher the grade, or the longer the service, the higher the level of overall job satisfaction.

But what is it about Federal service that makes employees satisfied (or dissatisfied)? Why do some choose to remain in the Government while others choose to leave? Certainly, personnel policies and practices play a role in these decisions. For many individuals, employee benefits, e.g., annual and sick leave, and the Civil Service Retirement System are important reasons for remaining in the Government. In addition, aspects of the work itself (such as meaningful work, opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile, and making good use of employees' skills and abilities) are critical to the satisfaction of Federal workers.

Differences found among groups of employees in their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of worklife lend support to the notion that not all employees are affected in the same way by Federal personnel policies and practices. Therefore, efforts to enhance the Federal Government as an employer or to bring about organizational change within Federal agencies should be focused according to these differences. Such efforts are more likely to succeed if they are directed at changing those aspects of work that are the source of the least satisfaction, and targeting the change to the least satisfied groups.

CONTENTS

MEASURING FEDERAL EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION 1

OVERALL FINDINGS ON JOB SATISFACTION 2

A CLOSER LOOK AT DIFFERENCES AMONG GROUPS 7
- GRADE LEVEL DIFFERENCES 7
- SEX DIFFERENCES 7
- LENGTH OF SERVICE DIFFERENCES 7
- SUPERVISOR/NONSUPERVISOR DIFFERENCES 8
- LOCATION OF WORKSITE DIFFERENCES 8
- EDUCATION DIFFERENCES 8
- AGE DIFFERENCES 9
- AGENCY DIFFERENCES 9
- SEX DIFFERENCES BY GRADE LEVEL 10
- SUPERVISOR/NONSUPERVISOR DIFFERENCES BY GRADE 11

JOB SATISFACTION TRENDS 12

CONCLUSION 13

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON JOB SATISFACTION 14

MEASURING FEDERAL EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION

What does it take to satisfy employees--and what difference does it make if they're satisfied or not? Public and private sector managers have been asking themselves these questions for decades. The fact that over a thousand studies have been done in the area of job satisfaction in the last 30 years (Lawler, 1973) attests to its perceived importance. In both the private and public sector, hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent each year to measure job satisfaction and its hypothesized components. Why?

In today's world, many organizations are concerned about providing a workplace that not only is safe but also promotes the overall well-being of its employees (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). As one of the largest employers in the country, the Federal Government is committed to such an objective. To assess how well their agencies are meeting this objective, Federal managers need feedback concerning the general climate of the organization, as well as insights as to why employees think the way they do about certain issues. The regulations and policies Federal policy makers develop can have a significant impact on a large and diverse work force. Job satisfaction information can provide the critical indicators managers and policy makers need to enhance the quality of the work environment.

The Merit Systems Protection Board periodically conducts surveys of the Federal work force to determine how employees view both their work, in general, and specific personnel policies and practices under which they work. The measurement of job satisfaction is important because it provides valuable clues as to how these policies and practices actually affect employee attitudes, and serves as an indicator of overall morale in the Federal work force. It is also beneficial to determine just how common certain attitudes are among Federal workers and to explore what's behind some of the more commonly expressed opinions of employees.

To assess the impact of various personnel policies and practices on the Federal work force, MSPB has administered two Merit Principles Surveys. The most recent survey, sent in 1986 to a stratified random sample of 21,620 civilian employees, provides the data discussed in this report.

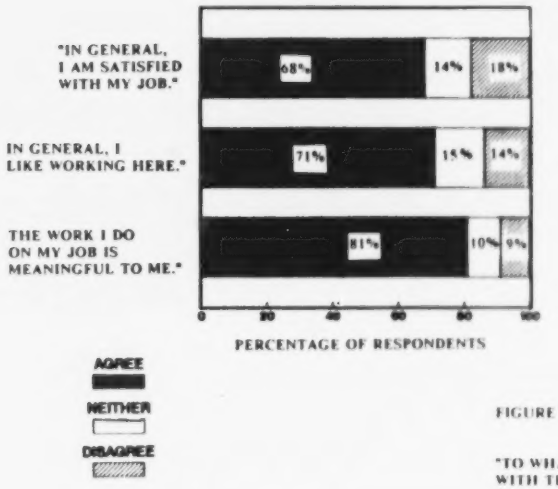
The 1986 Merit Principles Survey consisted of 64 questions pertaining to various human resource management issues, such as personnel practices, merit pay issues, supervisory practices, and Senior Executive Service (SES) issues. A disproportionately stratified random sample of 21,620 employees was drawn from permanent civilian employees in the executive branch of the Federal Government who were listed in the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Central Personnel Data File. The employees work in the 22 largest agencies (see Table 1 for a listing). (Not included in the sample were those employees located at a work site outside the continental United States, as well as those employed by the FBI, intelligence agencies, or quasi-independent agencies such as the Post Office.) Of the questionnaires mailed, 16,651 were returned (a return rate of 77 percent).

Items in the questionnaire typically contained five-point response scales, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." For clarity of presentation in this report, we usually combine the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses into one category labelled "agree." Likewise, we report the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses in one "disagree" category. Also, percentages reported may not add to 100 because of rounding or because the "neutral" category is not reported.

OVERALL FINDINGS ON JOB SATISFACTION

The results of the 1986 Merit Principles Survey show that a large percentage of Federal workers are satisfied with their jobs (68 percent), like their work (71 percent), and find their jobs to be meaningful (81 percent). These results are depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION



When asked about their level of satisfaction with various working conditions (e.g., fair treatment, good supervision, making good use of their skills and abilities), employees are still fairly positive, with responses ranging from the mid-forties to mid-seventies. For example, attitudes concerning supervisors can be seen in Figure 2.

Employees also have some interesting things to say about various aspects of their worklives when comparing their jobs to those "on the outside." For example, there are many more employees who believe that annual and sick leave benefits are a reason to stay in the Government than those who feel these benefits are a reason to leave (81 percent versus 2 percent, respectively). Only 26 percent of these employees believe that promotional opportunities are a reason to stay, while 45 percent believe promotional opportunities (or the lack of these) are a reason to leave.

FIGURE 2. SATISFACTION WITH SUPERVISION

"TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT YOUR SUPERVISOR?"

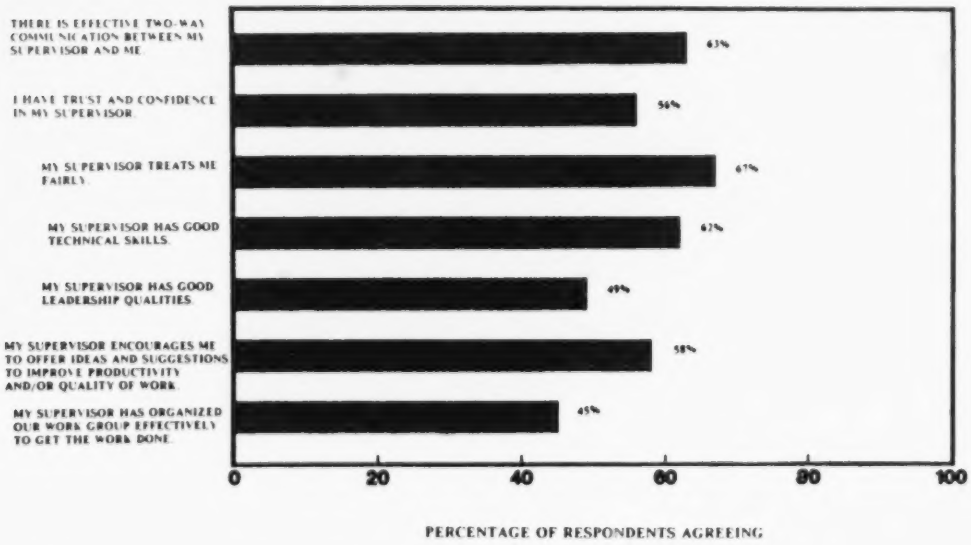
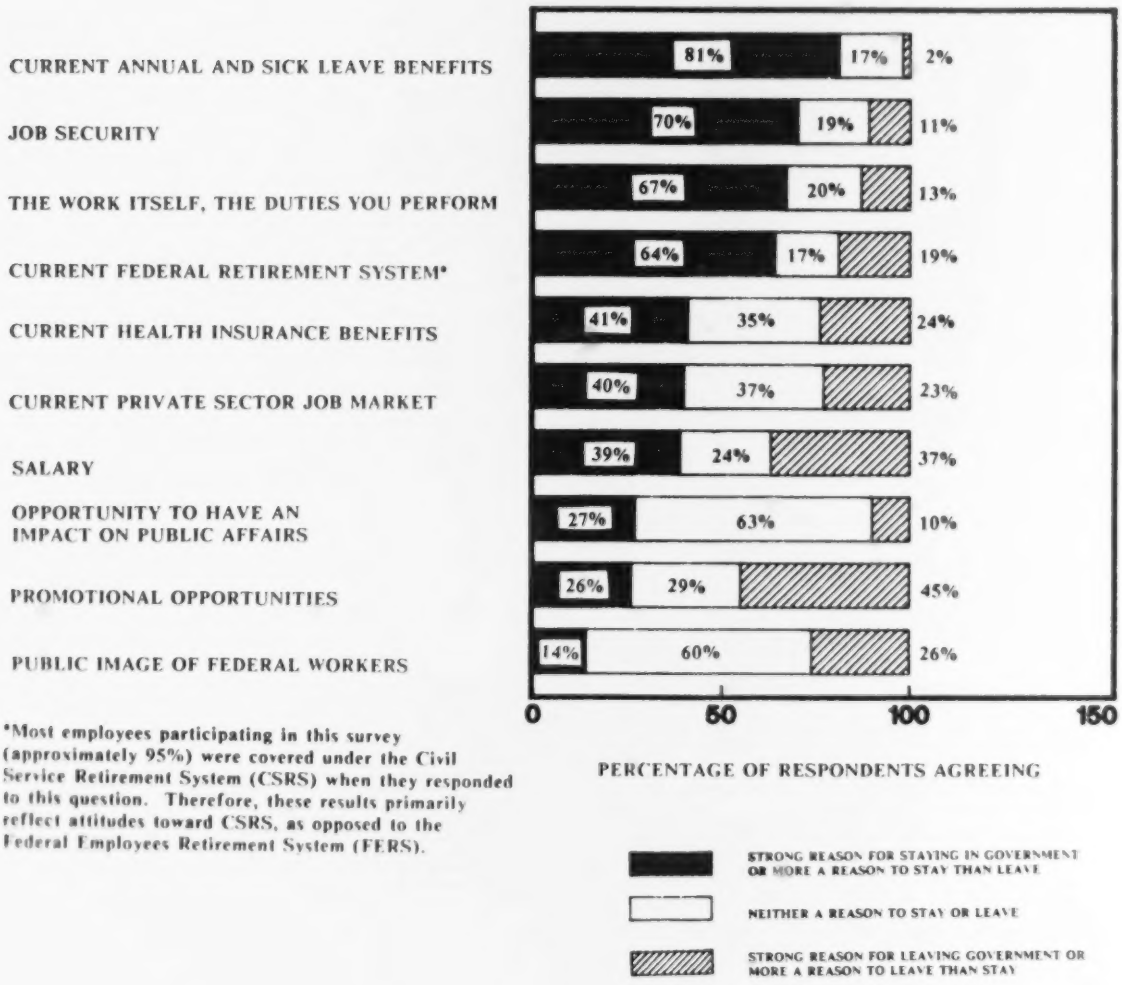


FIGURE 3. JOB SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF WORKLIFE

"TO WHAT EXTENT IS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING A REASON FOR YOU TO STAY IN OR LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT?"



*Most employees participating in this survey (approximately 95%) were covered under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) when they responded to this question. Therefore, these results primarily reflect attitudes toward CSRS, as opposed to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

Figure 3 depicts employees' views on these and several other facets of worklife in the Federal sector. As shown, employees appear generally satisfied with these particular aspects of worklife (at least, as they existed during the administration of the survey). Changes to these aspects of worklife will clearly result in shifts in attitudes. What is currently unknown, however, is the critical point at which such changes will turn a reason to stay into a reason to leave.

Respondents also have some thoughts about the quality and quantity of the work produced in their work groups. Twenty three percent believe that, to a great or considerable extent, the **quantity** of work could be increased, while 24 percent believe that the **quality** could be improved without an increase in staff.

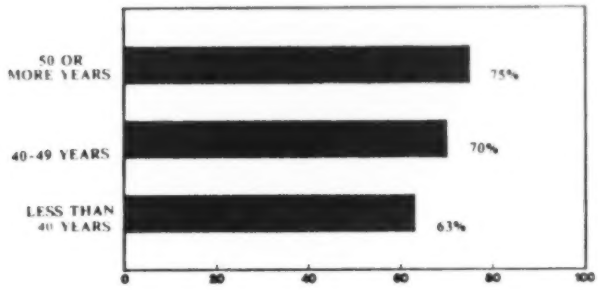
Finally, it is interesting to note that only 18 percent of the respondents report that they plan to look for a new job **outside Government** in the next year. However, nearly one-third (31 percent) express intentions to actively look for a new job **within** the Government. Perhaps the low number of workers intending to seek employment outside the Government is partially due to the aspects of Federal worklife with which employees seem most satisfied, such as annual and sick leave benefits, the retirement system, and job security. Changing jobs **within** the Government could have an impact on those aspects which are viewed by some as fairly strong reasons to leave (e.g., chances for promotion) but would not affect those aspects of Federal employment which are strong reasons to stay (e.g., annual and sick leave), since the latter aspects are Governmentwide.

The generally high level of satisfaction in the Federal work force doesn't necessarily mean that there aren't some meaningful differences in the attitudes of some subgroups of the work force. A closer look at the survey results shows that, although there are no meaningful sex differences in **overall** job satisfaction, there are differences in the levels of satisfaction expressed by employees of different age groups and lengths of service. Some of the largest differences are found among employees of different pay levels (i.e., SES, GS/GM 13-15, GS 9-12, GS 5-8, GS 1-4, and Prevailing Rate). Job satisfaction differences are also found among Federal agencies and between supervisors and nonsupervisors. Figures 4-7 illustrate some of these findings.

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

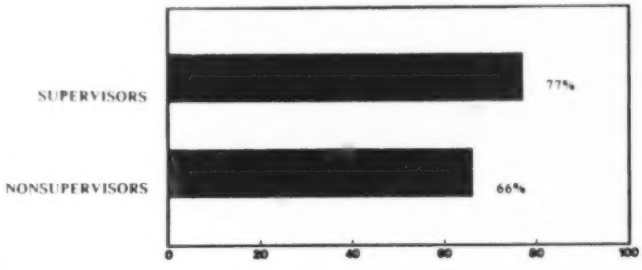
"IN GENERAL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY JOB."

FIGURE 4. BY AGE



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING

FIGURE 5. BY SUPERVISOR/NONSUPERVISOR



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

"IN GENERAL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY JOB."

FIGURE 6. BY GRADE

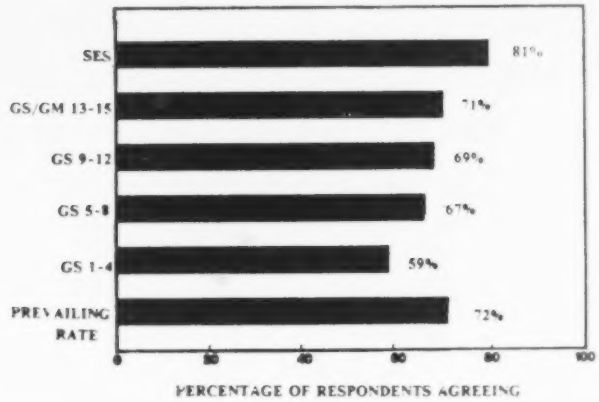
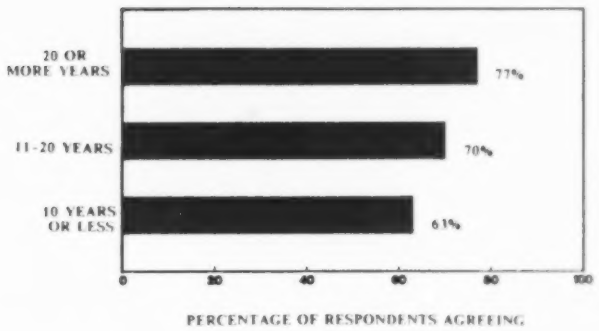


FIGURE 7. BY LENGTH OF SERVICE



Of the Federal agencies sampled, highest satisfaction levels are reported by NASA, the defense agencies (Army, Navy, Air Force), and the Small Business Administration. Lowest ratings come from the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development, where less than 60 percent of the work force report they are satisfied with their jobs.

Table 1 summarizes the results of two overall job satisfaction items from the survey. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the statements, "In general, I am satisfied with my job" (Item A in Table 1) and "In general, I like working here" (Item B in Table 1). Agencies are listed in ranked order, based on the averaging of responses to these two questions.

TABLE 1. OVERALL SATISFACTION BY AGENCY

Item A: "In general, I am satisfied with my job."
Item B: "In general, I like working here."

AGENCY	% AGREE ON A	% AGREE ON B
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMN.	75	83
AIR FORCE	71	76
ARMY	74	72
NAVY	70	75
SMALL BUSINESS ADMN.	75	71
JUSTICE	69	73
TRANSPORTATION	72	70
OTHER DOD	69	71
INTERIOR	69	71
VETERANS ADMN.	68	71
AGRICULTURE	66	71
COMMERCE	66	68
STATE	64	69
ENERGY	65	67
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY	62	67
TREASURY	64	65
GENERAL SERVICES ADMN.	61	67
LABOR	60	63
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	60	63
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	55	59
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	56	58
EDUCATION	48	48
OTHER	68	73
GOVERNMENT WIDE AVERAGE	68	71

A CLOSER LOOK AT DIFFERENCES AMONG GROUPS

In the previous section, we discussed variations in overall job satisfaction among different groups of employees. We explore some of these variations in further detail below. It is important to keep in mind when reading this section, however, that none of these groups are independent; thus, a grouping alone cannot account for differences found. For example, men and women are not distributed equally in the work force; therefore, age, grade, education level, and other factors may also be playing a role in any job satisfaction differences found between men and women. Likewise, an employee's grade may be related to education, age, agency, and other factors.

Therefore, results discussed below should be viewed as descriptive only, perhaps warranting further investigation--and not that membership in one of the groups is a "cause" of satisfaction.

Grade Level Differences

As noted previously, overall job satisfaction differs among employees of differing grade levels, with the SES being the most positive. The SES and GM/GS 13-15 groups consider work benefits (except for the retirement plan) less of a reason for staying in the Government than do the other groups. On the other hand, these two groups give higher satisfaction ratings to the work itself. This is perhaps due to the greater level of responsibility and higher discretion that usually is given to respondents in these two groups.

Sex Differences

Although no sex differences are found in terms of **overall** job satisfaction, there are some sizable differences in the ways men and women respond to specific job satisfaction items. Compared to men, women rate salary, promotional opportunities, job security, and health insurance as stronger reasons for staying with the Government. This is consistent with the greater percentage of men reporting that they plan to look outside Government for work than women (21 percent versus 16 percent, respectively). Another difference is found in attitudes toward the work itself. Although not negative, fewer (61 percent) of the women state that the work they perform is a reason to stay in the Government, compared with 71 percent of the men.

The two groups do not substantially differ in their satisfaction with leave and retirement benefits, nor do they differ on the survey questions related to work conditions (e.g., fair treatment, supervision).

Length of Service Differences

Dividing the respondents into three groups, based on length of Federal service, (less than 10 years, 11-20 years, and more than 20 years) results in only a few differences in attitudes towards various aspects of the job. Understandably, the more years of service respondents have, the greater the importance of the retirement plan. Those with more years of service are also more likely to participate in developing performance standards and, to a lesser extent, more likely to report better use of their skills and abilities.

On the other hand, increased length of service is associated with a decrease in the percentage of employees who feel they are treated fairly in promotions. A possible explanation for this is that those with fewer years of service are more likely to be found

at the entry or lower level positions (where there is room to move up), while those with more years of service may have already been promoted several times and are "topped out" in their career fields.

Supervisor/Nonsupervisor Differences

Supervisors are consistently more positive about their jobs than nonsupervisors. This is true both for the overall job and for specific facets of the job. Supervisors, as a group, find aspects of the work itself (e.g., duties performed, meaningfulness of the job, chance to accomplish something worthwhile) more satisfying than nonsupervisors. Supervisors also consider the current private sector job market as less of a reason to stay in the Government than do nonsupervisors; i.e., they appear to regard their skills as more "marketable" in the private sector.

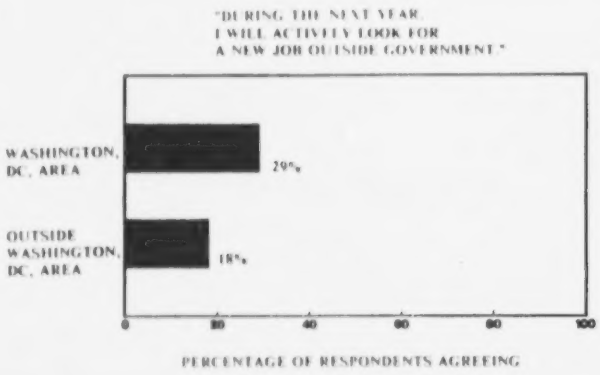
Supervisors express more positive beliefs about fair treatment on the job than nonsupervisors. Supervisors also participate in developing their own performance standards to a greater extent than nonsupervisors (41 percent versus 25 percent).

Location of Worksite Differences

There is a perception held by some that Federal employees working outside the Washington, DC, area are more satisfied with their jobs than those within the Washington, DC, area. This does not appear to be the case. No meaningful differences are found for location (i.e., Washington, DC, area versus outside the area) or for field versus headquarters groupings, in terms of overall job satisfaction.

However, there are some differences in satisfaction with some of the specific facets of work. For example, respondents inside the Washington, DC, area find work benefits and the private sector job market much less of a reason to stay with the Government than respondents who work outside the Washington, DC, area. Also, as shown in Figure 8, a higher percentage of Washington, DC, area workers plan to look for work **outside** the Government than workers outside the Washington, DC, area. Workers in the Washington, DC, area may have more opportunities for suitable employment outside the Government than other workers.

FIGURE 8. JOB SATISFACTION BY WORKSITE LOCATION



Education Differences

An employee's education level is also related to job satisfaction. Although respondents of various educational levels do not differ much in terms of their perceptions of treatment on the job and of the supervision they receive, they do vary in their reasons for staying in the Federal Government.

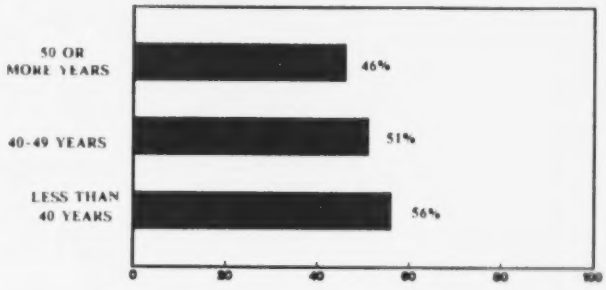
Individuals with a high school education (including those with some college or technical training) comprise over one-third

of the Federal work force. This group, compared with those with higher education levels, considers facets of the job such as outside job market, salary, and benefits as more important reasons for staying in the Government than for leaving it.

It is also interesting that while 25 percent and 28 percent of the high school and college graduates, respectively, participate in developing their performance standards, 38 percent of those with some graduate school training do. This is possibly due to differences in the types of jobs held by these two groups, since those with graduate school training are more likely to hold jobs requiring specialized or unique performance standards than those with less education.

FIGURE 9. PERCEIVED FAIRNESS IN PROMOTIONS BY AGE

"IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED FAIRLY IN REGARD TO PROMOTIONS?"



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING

Age Differences

Although there are some differences among age groups in terms of overall job satisfaction, these groups differ very little on specific aspects of job satisfaction. The most obvious difference is in the greater importance that retirement benefits and salary play in older workers' decisions to stay in the Government, as compared with younger workers' decisions.

Not surprisingly, older workers are less likely to look for another job. However, a greater percentage of older workers feel they are not treated fairly in promotions, compared to younger workers. This finding is consistent with the results found when employees are compared according to length of Federal service. Again, it may be the case that older workers have "topped out" in their career fields, while younger workers still have rungs left to climb on their career ladders. Thus, as can be seen in Figure 9, a perception of differential treatment results on the part of the older workers.

Agency Differences

Just as there are substantial agency variations in levels of **overall** job satisfaction, there are also some agency differences in the levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the job. We found no clear-cut patterns in the differences found, so drawing conclusions from these data is tenuous. One aspect of worklife that appears to contribute most strongly to overall job satisfaction is the "chance to accomplish something worthwhile." Generally speaking, agencies that are higher on overall job satisfaction are also more positive on this aspect, while those lower on job satisfaction are lower on this aspect. This aspect of the job tends to be more important to higher graded versus lower graded employees in the agencies, however.

Attitudes concerning the opportunity to have an impact on public affairs are also interesting. Respondents in most agencies are not particularly positive on this item

(responses ranged from 20 to 40 percent), but the Environmental Protection Agency stands out from other agencies with 65 percent of the employees identifying it as a reason to stay in the Government.

Sex Differences by Grade Level

As discussed previously, differences in satisfaction are found when responses are grouped by sex, as well as by grade level. When groups are formed on the basis of grade level **and** sex, however, new patterns emerge.

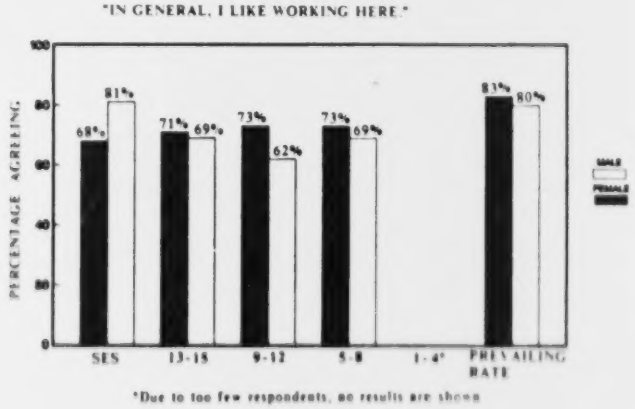
Although the overall job satisfaction differences between men and women in the six grade groups are small, there are some striking sex differences in the responses to the survey item, "In general, I like working here." While 68 percent of the SES women agree with this statement, this is considerably lower than the 81 percent agreement by the men in the SES group. Just the opposite effect is found in the GS 9-12 group, where women are more positive on this item than the men (73 percent versus 62 percent, respectively). Differences between male and female respondents in the other grade level groups are not as great, as shown in Figure 10.

As mentioned earlier, more women than men rate salary as a reason to stay in the Federal Government. This difference is relatively small within the SES group (21 percent for women, 14 percent for men) but becomes progressively greater with lower grade level groups. For the GS 5-8 group, the male-female difference increases to 23 percentage points (22 percent versus 45 percent).

The SES women also differ substantially from their male counterparts by giving lower ratings to the retirement plan, leave benefits, job security, and work duties. For example, 10 percent fewer women than men see work duties as a reason to stay in the Government. These differences, however, become much smaller and even reverse in other grade level groups.

Finally, 33 percent of the women in the SES group report intentions to leave their Government job for another Government job, compared with 23 percent of the men in this group.

FIGURE 10. SEX DIFFERENCES IN JOB SATISFACTION BY GRADE LEVEL



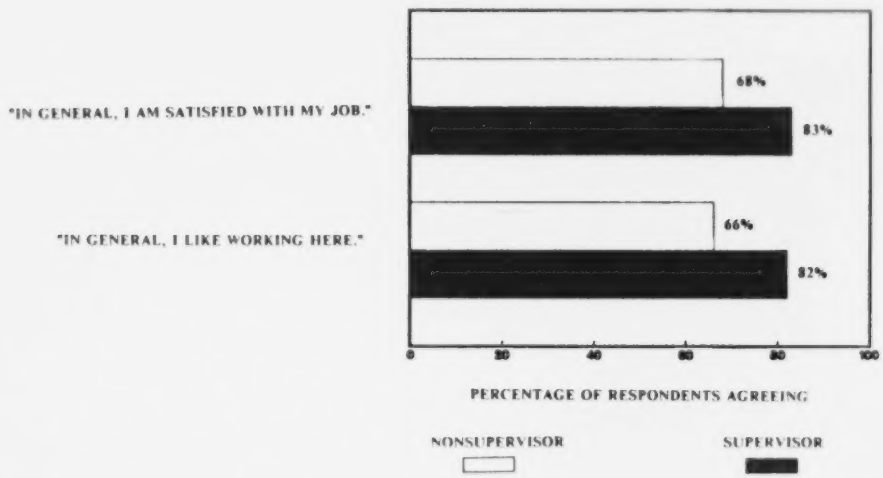
*Due to too few respondents, no results are shown

Supervisor/Nonsupervisor Differences by Grade Level

Just as sex differences vary with grade levels, so do supervisor/nonsupervisor differences. As noted previously, overall job satisfaction differences are large between supervisors and nonsupervisors, with supervisors consistently responding more positively. These differences are much larger, however, in the SES and GS 9-12 grade level groups.

Nonsupervisory SES employees stand apart, in particular. Although generally more satisfied than the remainder of the Federal work force, nonsupervisory senior executive executives tend to be less satisfied than their supervisory counterparts, as shown in Figure 11. They perceive their jobs as less meaningful, as not making as good use of their skills, and as not being as fair in terms of awards, promotions, training, and assignments. Despite this, they do not show a greater intention to leave their jobs than their supervisory counterparts.

FIGURE 11. SES JOB SATISFACTION BY SUPERVISOR/NONSUPERVISOR



JOB SATISFACTION TRENDS

Managers and policy makers are often interested in determining how job satisfaction levels have changed over the years, especially if new policies or programs have been implemented which may have had an impact on the morale of the work force. Such changes in attitudes are difficult to document, however, for a number of reasons. For example, if one is trying to make comparisons among attitude surveys conducted at different points in time, changes in the composition of the work force can affect the results. Also, subtle changes in the wording of questions from one study to another can produce different results.

Even with these considerations, it is useful to make some comparisons across the different surveys administered. In comparing the overall level of job satisfaction from the 1986 Merit Principles Survey and the Merit Principles Survey administered by MSPB in 1983, there appears to be a modest increase (approximately 10 percent) in satisfaction. However, since the wording of the overall satisfaction questions is somewhat different in the two surveys, these differences must be interpreted with caution. Also, in trying to understand the "cause" of apparent increases in overall job satisfaction, it is important to remember that job satisfaction is a complex attitude, and perceptions concerning many different facets of the job may contribute to it.

A number of questions concerning various aspects of work were asked on both Merit Principles Surveys. For the most part, results were fairly consistent. The single notable change in employee attitudes toward aspects of work concerns the retirement system. In 1983, 71 percent of the respondents in the Federal work force cited their retirement plan as a reason for staying with the Federal Government. In 1986 this figure dropped to 62 percent.

The reason for the substantial drop in satisfaction with the retirement system may reflect the actual and planned changes of the system that occurred during this 1983-86 timeframe. If the drop in satisfaction were due to general factors affecting the composition of the work force, similar drops in satisfaction would have been apparent for other Federal job benefits. This was not the case.

Finally, OPM has also administered two, similar attitude surveys to employees throughout the Federal work force. These Federal Employee Attitudes Surveys (administered in 1979 and 1983) are consistent in overall job satisfaction trends with the results of the Merit Principles Surveys administered by MSPB.

CONCLUSION

The results of the 1986 Merit Principles Survey suggest that the level of overall job satisfaction in the Federal work force is moderately high, relative to the widespread speculation that Federal employees are discontented. Most Federal workers believe their jobs are meaningful and make good use of their skills. Work characteristics such as annual and sick leave benefits, job security, the work itself, and the CSRS retirement plan are cited as reasons for continuing to work for the Federal Government. However, on the whole, employees are not as satisfied with their salaries, health insurance, opportunities to have an impact on public affairs, and promotional opportunities.

Consequently, any events that change the aforementioned aspects of Federal employment may result in positive changes in the attitudes of the Federal work force. To the extent that these attitudes affect actions (for example, leaving the Government), such changes may have substantial impact.

Individual Federal agencies may want to explore some of the 1986 Merit Principles Survey findings in more depth within the context of their own work force and their unique mission and work environment. Significant events in an agency may account for differences found at a particular time. Also, high or low ratings may reflect an agency's higher or lower proportion of workers belonging to those subgroups having the strongest impact on results found, such as grade level, age, and education.

In conclusion, attitudes toward their own jobs are fairly positive among Federal workers and are influenced by many factors. As was previously discussed, employees view some aspects of the job as stronger selling points for staying with the Government than others. Of course, some aspects of work that affect the decision to stay or leave are not under the direct control of the agency or even of policy makers outside the agency. There are aspects of the job and worklife, however, over which Federal managers and policy makers do have some control. For example, although policy makers and managers may not have any control over the private sector job market, they can influence decisions concerning such issues as promotional opportunities and salary, and may even play a role in aspects such as the public image of Federal employees (or, at least, employees' perceptions of this image). As such, employees' attitudes toward various aspects of their jobs should be carefully considered by those developing new (or modifying existing) personnel regulations, policies, and practices.

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